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PAGE 01 BUDAPE 04663 191350Z
ACTION EUR-00

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R 191308Z MAY 87
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8072
INFO EASTERN EUROPEAN POSTS
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AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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E.O. 12356:N/A
TAGS: PHUM, PGOV, PROP, HU
SUBJECT: *WALLENBERG STATUE OFFICIALLY UNVEILED*

REF: BUDAPEST 4525

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH CARRIED OUT WITH DIGNITY AND DECORUM, THE OFFICIAL DEDICATION OF BUDAPEST'S WALLENBERG STATUE WAS MARKED BY AN UNUSUALLY LARGE NUMBER OF POLICE. THEIR PRESENCE UNDERScoreD THE AMBIGUOUS SEMI-PUBLIC NATURE OF THE CEREMONY. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE EVENT, A DISSIDENT CHALLENGED THE CREDIBILITY OF THE HUNGARIAN AND SOVIET AUTHORITIES' ACCOUNT OF THE MISSING SWEDISH DIPLOMAT'S FATE. END SUMMARY.

2. ON MAY 15, A CROWD OF SEVERAL HUNDRED ATTENDED THE
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PAGE 02 BUDAPE 04663 191350Z

UNVEILING CEREMONY OF BUDAPEST'S STATUE TO RAOU

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DECLASSIFICATION OF STATE
CLASSIFIED BY 61H DATE 10/14/94
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WALLENBERG. ALTHOUGH NOT PUBLICALLY ACKNOWLEDGED, THE STATUE, A GIFT OF THE FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO HUNGARY, IS ALLEGEDLY LOCATED AT ALMOST THE EXACT SPOT IN BUDA WHERE WALLENBURG'S EMPTY CAR WAS FOUND FOLLOWING HIS ARREST BY THE SOVIETS ON JANUARY 17, 1945. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING A SPEECH BY EMIL PEJAK, FIRST SECRETARY OF THE BUDAPEST BRANCH OF THE PATRIOTIC PEOPLE'S FRONT, WHO SALUTED THE SWEDISH DIPLOMAT'S HEROIC ROLE IN SAVING THE LIVES OF TENS OF THOUSANDS OF HUNGARIAN JEWS, THE MAYOR OF BUDAPEST, PEJAK, MEMBERS OF THE OFFICIAL JEWISH COMMUNITY, THE SWEDISH AMBASSADOR AND OTHER OFFICIAL DELEGATES PLACED FLOWERS AND WREATHS AT THE BASE OF THE LIFE-SIZE STATUE. WHEN PEOPLE OTHER THAN OFFICIALS WERE GIVEN A CHANCE TO SHOW THEIR RESPECTS, A GROUP OF OPPOSITIONISTS INCLUDING "DEMOKRATA" CO-EDITOR GYORGY GADO AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE DISSIDENT ARTIST GROUP "INCONNU" LAID A FLORAL ARRANGEMENT WHICH INCLUDED THREE RIBBONS. THE FIRST RIBBON READ "DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION," THE SECOND HAD THE WORDS "TO THE VICTIMS OF THE SOVIET SYSTEM" AND THE THIRD ONE SALUTED "THE HEROES OF THE ANTI-FASCIST STRUGGLE."

3. AFTER THE CEREMONY OFFICIALLY ENDED AND AS THE CROWD BEGAN TO DISPERSE, GYORGY GADO GAVE A SHORT SPEECH IN WHICH HE CHARGED THAT ALTHOUGH THE AUTHORITIES HAVE BROKEN THE SILENCE WHICH THEY MAINTAINED FOR FORTY YEARS, "IT SHOULD NOT BE REPLACED BY SPEECHES WHICH ARE AS LYING AS THE SILENCE WHICH PRECEDED IT." GADO ASSERTED THAT "THOSE WHO WANT US TO BELIEVE THAT WALLENBERG DIED...LACK CREDIBILITY." AMONG HIS CONCLUDING REMARKS, GADO SAID
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PAGE 03

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"THEY CALL TYRANNY FREEDOM AND WAR PEACE." AFTER HIS SPEECH HE JOINED A SMALL NUMBER OF FELLOW OPPOSITIONISTS AND SANG THE NATIONAL ANTHEM.

4. COMMENT: NOTWITHSTANDING PRESS REPORTS (WHICH OF COURSE FAILED TO MENTION THE LIMITED DISSIDENT ACTIVITY), THE CEREMONY WAS NOT AS STRAIGHTFORWARD AS IT APPEARED. UNIFORMED POLICE PREVENTED PRIVATE CARS FROM APPROACHING THE PERIMETER AND DID NOT ALLOW PUBLIC BUSES TO MAKE SCHEDULED STOPS IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY. A NUMBER

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OF NON-OFFICIAL HUNGARIANS COMMENTED ON THE LARGE NUMBER OF PLAINCLOTHES POLICE IN AND ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE CROWD. SOME OBSERVERS ALSO COMMENTED BITTERLY THAT THOSE WHO LAID WREATHS INSTEAD OF FLOWERS WERE IMPLICITLY ACCEPTING THE SOVIET VERSION OF WALLENBERG'S ALLEGED DEATH.

UNCERTAINTY ALSO EXTENDED INTO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. ALTHOUGH THE U.S., UK, SWEDISH AND CANADIAN AMBASSADORS WERE PRESENT, THE CORPS WAS REPORTEDLY UNCERTAIN WHO AMONG THEM AND THEIR STAFFS WAS EXPECTED TO ATTEND. THE BRAZILIAN CHARGE ALLEGEDLY DISCUSSED THE AMBIGUOUS SEMI-PUBLIC NATURE OF THE DEDICATION WITH HER COLLEAGUES WHO DECIDED TO SHOW UP IN ANY CASE. IN ADDITION, THE GOH REFUSED TO GRANT THE SWEDISH AMBASSADOR, WE ARE TOLD, PERMISSION TO GIVE A SPEECH EVEN THOUGH HE HAD INSTRUCTIONS FROM STOCKHOLM TO DO SO.
PALMER

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